

Fort Des Moines Historic Complex,  
Building 46  
(Bachelor Officers Quarters)  
Des Moines  
Polk County  
Iowa

HABS No. IA-121-C

HABS  
IOWA,  
77-DESMO,  
24-C-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

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Building No. 46. Bachelor Officers Quarters

This structure, completed on November 17, 1904, at a cost of \$35,456.87, is one of the oldest surviving buildings at Fort Des Moines. Originally erected to house ten bachelor officers, the structure served as a nurses quarters (apparently during World War I) and later as a quarters for married officers. The building adhered to specifications contained in standardized plan 152B prepared in 1902 in the office of the Quartermaster General.

Fronting on Dickman Road off the northeast corner of the parade, Building No. 46 rests on a rusticated limestone basement foundation and has red brick walls joined in running bond with red-pigmented mortar. Originally the hipped roof was of slate. Today it is covered with asphalt shingles. The main part of the two-story building measures 140 feet by 33 feet. A central pavilion on the front measures 33 feet by 11 feet 8 inches; a rear wing measures 45 feet by 33 feet 4 inches. The second level of the front pavilion is supported by brick pillars with limestone capitals and bases. The resulting inset main entrance has a double door with lights above and on each side. Above the entrance are three double-hung windows and an arched three-light window is centered on the front gable. On either side of the door is another double-hung window. Most windows have flat arches with projecting keystones, plus limestone lug sills. At the front of the building adjoining the pavilion is a two-story porch complete with turned columns and balustrade. Three double-hung windows of six lights each face front on each level, on either side of the wing. Double doors are on the lower level near the ends of the building, while single doors with four lights each are on the upper level. Cellar entries were at the northwest and northeast rear of the main building and at the north rear of the main building where it adjoins the rear wing. Highly decorative corbeled chimneys stand on either end of the building, with four more surmounting the roof. The cornice of the main building

has modillions at front, sides, and rear. The rear of the main building has ten windows of four or six lights arranged on each level. Four more windows, two per level, are located on the ends of the structure. Along the rear and side foundation walls are basement windows and openings for coal chutes. The front pavilion of Building No. 46 has a projecting gable with raking cornice and ornamental bracketing. The roof of the rear wing is hipped, and a single corbeled chimney protrudes through it. The rear wing has nine double-hung windows and one doorway on each side. At the back of the wing are two such windows, one on the upper level and one on the lower. The building has iron guttering and downspouts.

The interior of Building No. 46 contains 11,275 square feet of floor space. Rooms and their measurements are as follows:

Basement:

8 storerooms, 7' 5" x 14' 1"  
2 cellars, 27' 6" x 30'  
2 storerooms, 9' 4" x 14' 6"  
1 cellar, 30' 4" x 51' 8"  
1 cellar, 30' 1" x 45'  
(Cellar space includes 4 coal bins and 1 laundry.)

First floor:

4 Parlors, 14' 11" x 16' 6"  
4 Bedrooms, 13' 9" x 14' 11"  
4 Bathrooms, 6' 6" x 9'  
1 Parlor, 14' 11" x 18' 4"  
1 Assembly room, 18' 4" x 31' 10"  
1 Lavatory, 7' 9" x 9'  
1 Dining room, 18' x 30' 10"  
1 Storeroom, 9' x 12' 9"  
1 Kitchen, 16' 6" x 17' 5"  
1 Pantry, 9' x 12' 9"  
4 Closets, 2' 1" x 5' 3"  
2 Halls, 8' x 21' 2"  
1 Hall, 4' 6" x 14'

Second floor:

4 Parlors, 14' 11" x 16' 6"  
4 Bedrooms, 13' 9" x 14' 11"  
4 Bathrooms, 6' 6" x 9'

2 Parlors, 14' 11" x 18' 4"  
2 Bedrooms, 14' 11" x 18' 4"  
2 Bathrooms, 7' 9" x 9'  
2 Rooms, 11' x 11' 11"  
4 Bedrooms, 8' 9" x 12' 9"  
2 Bedrooms, 9' x 12' 6"  
1 Bathroom, 7' x 12' 9"  
2 Closets, 2' 1" x 5' 3"  
4 Closets, 6' 6" x 3' 9"  
1 Hall, 4' x 50' 2"  
1 Hall, 14' x 25' 8"  
2 Halls, 8' x 21' 2"  
1 Hall, 6' x 11'

Building No. 46 was heated with steam and had electricity. In the late 1920s two gas ranges and one water heater were installed, along with a 295 gallon water tank. Repairs to the structure between 1904 and 1922 averaged \$139.00 per year. At the end of June, 1930, construction was completed converting the building into quarters for four married officers, two bachelor officers, and three transient officers at an expenditure of \$512.98. Additional water heaters were installed during the 1930s, and in 1934 a lavatory was built in one of the basement rooms. In 1941 (and possibly much earlier) the building was being utilized as an officers' club. On the morning of March 3 a fire erupted in the kitchen but caused no major damage.

The building was in good condition early in 1987. The interior of the structure has been extensively renovated through the years. The first floor has been refurbished with prefinished paneling, carpeting, vinyl baseboard, and suspended ceiling with fluorescent lighting. There are four original fireplaces, an arched doorway, plus original paneled doors with 3-light, top-hinged transom panels. The original rooms have been partitioned and contain pre-hung doors and venetian blinds. A turned balustraded railing bounds the u-shaped staircase leading to the upper level. A rear stairway also has a turned baluster rail. On the upper floor there are four manteled fireplaces. The rooms there are also partitioned and carpeted. On the exterior, the porches once standing

along the entire front length of the structure have long since been removed. Likewise, those on the back are gone. At the northeast and northwest rear of the main building, door openings at the upper and lower levels have been bricked in. In addition, the northeast corner of the rear wing shows evidence of having been bolstered at one time. Today vacant, as of the 1970s the building was still in service as an army and navy recruiting station. (18)

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18. Card for Building No. 46. "Historical Record of Buildings." NA, RG 77, Box 51; Plan, "Bachelor Officers' Qrs.," No. 152B, July, 1902, and October, 1905, 9 sheets. NA, RG 77. Cartographic Archives Division; Fort Des Moines to War Department, March 21, 1941. NA, RG 407. Project Decimal File, 1940-45. Military Posts and Reservations, Box No. 4425; Field survey notes, February 20-22, 1987.